Recommendation
For the Placement of ABHR in Public Areas of Health Care Facilities

**Aim**
To help protect our patients, other visitors and staff from transmission of infectious agents such as colds, flu, gastroenteritis and other micro-organisms.

Alcohol-based hand-rubs (ABHRs) are a quick and effective method of Hand Hygiene and should be freely available for use by all. The use of an ABHR by visitors when they enter and leave the health care facility is recommended.

**Infection Control is Everybody's Business**
There are many issues to be considered before a facility places ABHR in public areas, including: adherence to the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS), local fire regulations, facility engineering and occupational health and safety (OH&S) requirements. After consultation with a number of authorities including the Melbourne Metropolitan Fire Brigade the following guidelines have been developed:

Unique to each site will be how the products are supplied, the type of brackets, the cost centre's involved and storage of the products. The overall risk of fires associated with ABHR is extremely low – a recent U.S. study of 766 healthcare facilities demonstrated that after a combined experience of 1,430 years of ABHR use, there had not been a single fire attributed to ABHR (1-2).

**Recommendations**
- ABHR bottles should not be decanted
- The maximum size of an individual ABHR dispenser should not exceed 500mls (3-4)
- No more than 80 individual ABHR dispensers (each with a maximum capacity of 500ml) should be installed within a single smoke compartment
- Corridors should have at least 1.8m wide with at least 150cm between each ABHR dispenser (2-4)
- Dispensers should not project more than 15cm into corridor egress (3-5)
- Wall mounted brackets should be located at a height of between 92cms and 122 cm above the floor (avoid placing at eye level) (5-6)
- Dispensers should not be located over carpeted areas, unless the area is protected by active sprinklers (2)
- Dispensers should not be located over, or directly adjacent to ignition sources (e.g. electrical switches, power points, call buttons, or monitoring equipment) (2-3, 5)
- ABHR dispensers should be separated from heat sources and electric motors (3, 5)
- Dispensers should be installed according to manufacturer’s recommendations and to minimise leaks or spills (2)
- Regular maintenance of dispensers and brackets should occur in accordance with manufacturer’s guidelines (2)
- Product usage signs should be clearly visible and laminated
- Regular monitoring of each area is recommended for misuse, or removal of product
- Each facility should take adequate care regarding the placement of each dispenser so as to protect vulnerable populations, for example in psychiatric units, drug and alcohol units, paediatric units and units caring for cognitively impaired patients (3)
- ABHR bottles should be designed so as to minimise evaporation due to the volatile nature of alcohols
- Site-specific instructions should be developed to manage adverse events, such as ABHR ingestion, eye splashes or allergic reactions

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References


